

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2019

**Venue:** DISHA Training Room Arambagh SDO Office

**Agenda of the day:** Awareness Workshop on Sustainable Menstruation along with introduction of Anahat Unnati Re-usable cloth pads (stencil making)

**No. of participants:** 15 SHG members (4 from Chandi SHG, 2 from Gulab SHG, 2 from Vivekananda SHG, 2 from Maa Chandi SHG, 1 from GAUR SHG and 2 from Rashmoni SHG)

At 10:15 am on 1<sup>st</sup> August we met Arambagh SDO at her office. She shared with us her vision and expectations of the LALANA Campaign. She shared her vision of training 2000 Ashas and Anganwadi workers in Arambagh on menstrual hygiene management. She also informed us about the opening of the recent LALANA corner in a hospital. The next day 5 LALANA corners would be inaugurated.



The session started with Arambagh SDO, Lakshmi Bhavya Tanneru introducing the holistic menstrual hygiene campaign, LALANA to the SHG members. LALANA as the name suggests "NARI" is the centre of the programme and revolves around holistic development of the women of the society in terms of their menstrual hygiene. She went on to explain how these SHG women can become a part of the campaign by extending their support in making re-usable cloth pads which will later be branded as re-usable cloth pads. She also explained the long term economic benefits of the pads and how it will be a great way for the women to earn livelihood by making these pads.



After a brief discussion on the campaign by the SDO, we started with a small ice-breaking session where the SHG women introduced themselves. They mentioned their names, block name, SHG name and what is their SHG all about. Our observation on their introduction was that most of them were a part of the SHG only to take loans and repay them. None of the members were actively learning a skill or producing any meaningful product under the SHG. Few of them mentioned that they have learnt stitching and making dolls as part of the SHG.



The session started by discussing, the various signs of growth in the body. Basic questions like- what is adolescence, when does menstruation starts, what are the signs of growth in the body during this age, why do changes happen in the body? How many times do we get periods in a month, at what age does it starts, how long does the periods lasts?. The participants initially seemed unaware about these concepts but slowly started to show signs of interest. The session was an interactive one where women raised questions about various changes in the body.

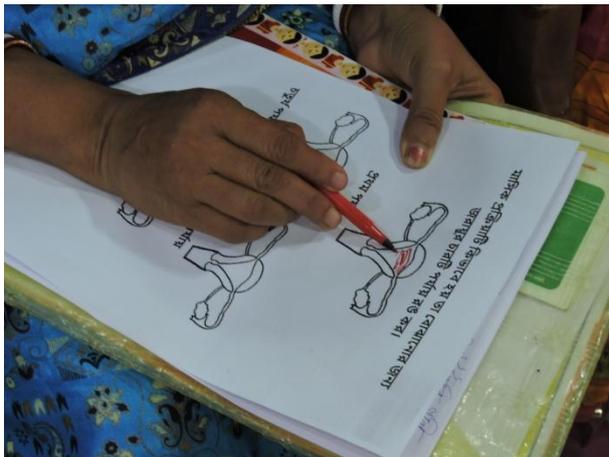


We discussed Pre-menstrual syndrome with the participants who seemed to have very little idea about various kinds of signs of PMS. Along with PMS we also cleared their doubts about white discharge and how it is normal for women to get white discharge in small amounts few days before their periods.



A uterus soft toy was used to describe various parts of the uterus and how the process of menstruation takes place. A uterus cycle was also explained to the participants. They were explained in details how the uterus looks at all the 4 stages in a month- Menstrual stage, follicular stage, ovulation stage and luteal phase.

A funny menstruation video was also showed to them where it was shown how an egg travels through the fallopian tube and waits at the uterus for the sperm and ultimately gets dissolved with the lining of the blood.



An activity sheet and red sketchpens were distributed to the participants where they had to show how the uterus looks at each stage of menstruation. In the first stage they had to show a uterus with heavy lining of blood with drops falling as menstruation occurs. In the second stage, they had to show a thin lining of blood which is starting to form, the third stage which is on day 14, called the ovulation stage where the egg travels through the tube and waits at the uterus. In the fourth stage a very thick lining of blood forms as the dates near the menstrual stage.



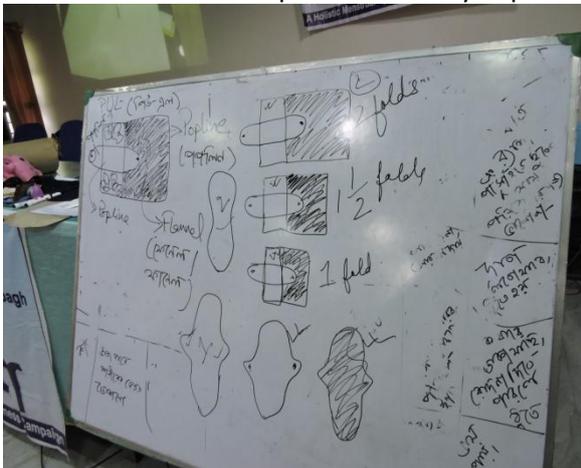
Post explaining the menstrual cycle, various abnormalities were discussed with the participants. Cases where a woman gets her dates twice in a month or gets her dates once in two months are considered abnormal situations and this should be consulted with the doctor. Similarly, if a woman experiences excruciating pain in the abdomen or stomach, it is also a sign of abnormality and should

be consulted with the doctor.



After covering the basics of menstrual hygiene the participants went for a lunch break. Post the lunch break most of the session was on sustainability and different kinds of products available in the market. The audience was introduced to the concept of sustainability. Various products such as cloth, re-usable cloth pad, disposable pads, menstrual cups were discussed with the participants. Participants were also educated on the various layers of a disposable pads and how harmful they are for the environment and for individuals health. Regarding the re-usable cloth pad, they were given a brief on the materials used to make the pad, different uses of materials and their names, how to wash cloth pads and how to store the pads in a safe and hygienic way.

For the first time, women were seeing menstrual cups. They were informed about the various advantages of using a cup including economic benefits in the long run. The ladies seem to gladly accept the fact that the products available in the market like cloth pads and cups are more sustainable than the disposable sanitary napkins.



Since the training mostly revolves around making of re-usable cloth pad, every size of the pad was drawn on the board and explained to the participants. It was made sure that the participants learn the names of the materials used to make the pads and size differences in each pads. After detailed explanation on the pads, a video was shown to them on "How to make Anahat Unnati Foldable Pads"



A step by step process of making Anahat Unnati Foldable pad was shown to the participants. The video explained how a stencil has to be made and then it can be used to cut various pieces of cloth and then they can all be put together to make a pad.



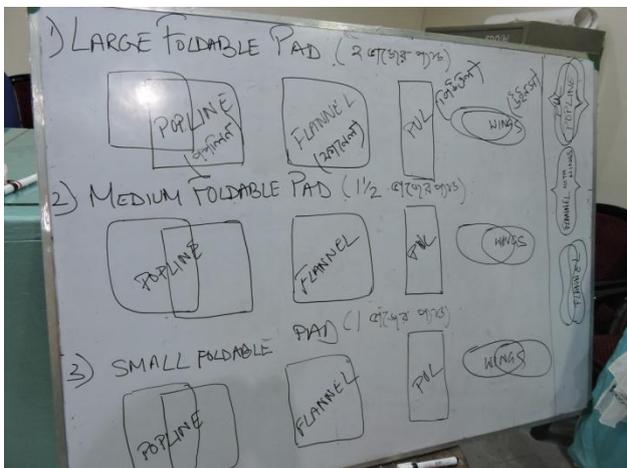
A mount board was given to every member to make a stencil. Rupam Ji from Anahat assisted the members to make stencils of each material of the pads- Popline, flannel, PUL and wings. The participants were taught how to measure every stencil and write on the stencil. The women ended the day by cutting the stencil for foldable pad.

**Date-** 2<sup>nd</sup> August

**Venue-** Disha Training Room, SDO Office & PBSSD Training Centre

**Agenda of the day-** Re-usable cloth Pad stitching & Pad-shaped stencil cutting

**No. of Participants-** 15 SHG members



The second day of the training started at 11:00 am sharp. The participants were given a brief summary of yesterday's session. Proper description of the pad was given with the help of a board work. Every part of the pad was drawn on the board with the names of the materials mentioned. The video of foldable pad making was projected again to revive their memory before actual pad making in the unit. Anahat's video on "How to make Anahat Heavy Pad" was also projected.



The video was followed by Heavy Pad stencil cutting. This time the women were prepared and had come with proper instruments like- chalk, pencil, scale, scissors etc.



The materials to make 2 sets of pads for the SHG 's were handed over to them. This included 24 metres of popline, 10 metres of Flannel, 5 metres of PUL, 120 buttons, 10 threads which is enough to make 2 sets of pads (2 large foldable, 2 medium foldable, 2 small foldable and 2 anahat heavy pads).



The participants were asked to cut a large folbale pad for themselves. They had to use the stencils that they made the previous day. All the members used their stencils and started cutting different materials for the pad. The women initially worked individually but seemed to be helping each other towards the end. Post lunch they were asled to shift to a training unit which had sewing machines. The unit was 5 mins walking dostance from the SDO office



Post lunch, the venue was shifted to PBSSD unit in Arambagh. The unit was 5 minutes away from the SDO's office. The women took some time to adjust the machines and set the bobbins. Soon they were able to get the machines working. The women followed the exact instructions given to them. They started by first stitching the two popline material and flannel together. As instructed they had kept a small part open in order to fold open the pad. This was followed by (chaap selai) giving final stitching around the pad. After this, they made the wings using the popline and stitched the PUL along the side of the pad.



SHG women displaying the final product made by them.



Once they had all made a single large foldable pad, women started cutting medium and small foldable pads for themselves. They took this as a homework to make these pads at home and bring it tomorrow morning to collect feedback. Infact, we decided to start early next day so that everybody gets a chance to make pads.

**Date-** 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2019-08-05

**Venue-** PBSSD National Youth Centre & DISHA Training Room, SDO Office

**Agenda of the day-** Anahat Heavy Pad Stitching & Training on Branding, Labelling, Packaging, Pricing

**No. of Participants-** 12 SHG members and 3 WDO's



Third day of the training started at 10 am at National Youth Centre. Since the participants had cut a medium and a small foldable pad the other day to make at home, we checked everyone's work in details. After a thorough review we found that only two women had were able to make perfect medium and small foldable pads. Few of them did not get the size right and about 3 women got their pads made from their relatives. The two women who could make correct pads were Hamida Bibi (left) and Deepa Dey.



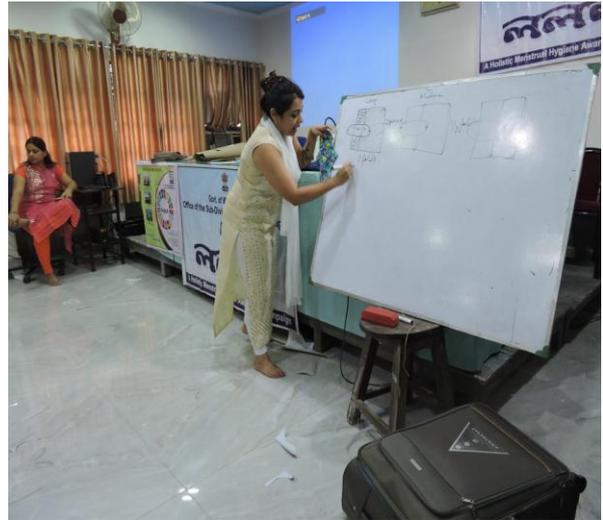
In the above pictures, Hamida Bibi and Deepa Dey are trying their hand at Anahat Heavy Pads. Once they were able to make Foldable pads, we asked these two women to cut the haeavy pad using their stencil. The video of "How to make Anahat Heavy Pad" was shown to them the previous day. Rupam Ji from our team assisted them in making the pad. They were able to make the pads but would need more practice to get the exact shape.



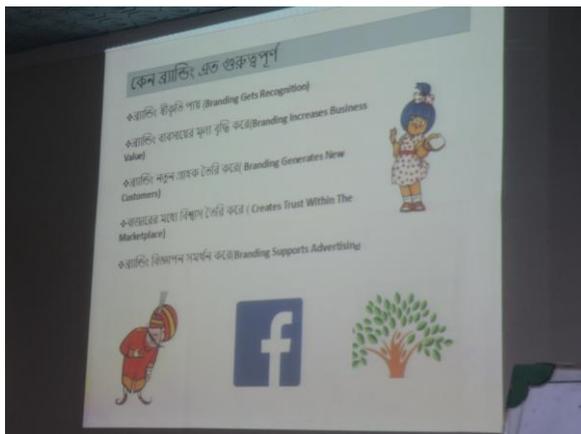
At around 12 pm, SDO Madam herself visited the training centre to check everyone's work. She visited everyone's machine and asked for their work, She compared Anahat Large Foldbale pads with the pads they had made. She explained the ladies that it is important to keep the PUL size the same in all the three pads. She also eliminated a few participants who did not know how to operate a sewing machine and took their relatives help to make the pads. She selected 13 such women who will be able to take further training.



After SDO Madam's visit, we left the training room and came to DISHA Training Hall. We spent one hour in correcting everyone's stencils and clearing doubts. Few ladies also started cutting materials for one large foldbale pad each to make at home. At 1:45 pm we all left for lunch.



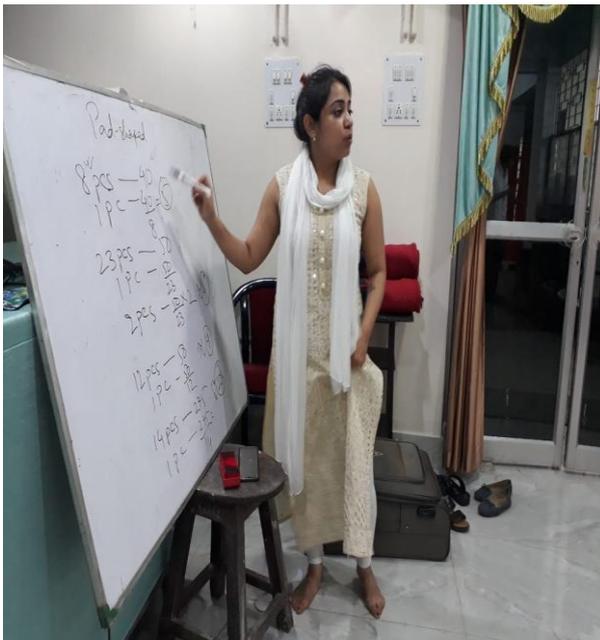
Post lunch we met again at DISHA Training Room. This time the WDO's had also joined us. We gave them a gist of our training from Day 1. We also requested them to understand the basics of cloth pad and materials used so that they can help the SHG's whenever they need to place orders for making pads. We explained them about the contents of the foldable as well as heavy pad. The WDO's seemed quite satisfied with the product and wanted to use them and check the results.



We explained how Branding is important for a new product and what are the common uses of branding. We took examples of products like AMUL, DABUR, FACEBOOK and AIR INDIA to explain branding. We then examples of different companies like UGER Pads, Eco Femme, SOCH GREEN and explained them what their names and logo means. From Branding we went to packaging and labeling. We showed them how different companies choose the packaging of cloth pads and what will be the most cost effective and sustainable way of packaging a product.



The participants were divided into 4 groups of 3 women each. In each group case study was given revolving around branding, selling, packaging, marketing etc. The participants did exceptionally well in answering the questions following the case study. The case study was designed in a way that they could easily relate to. One of the case studies was role play and women did absolute justice to it. In the role play, one participant had to convince the other one to switch to a cloth pad. The group which got the role play, their performance was outstanding.



The last part of the session was pricing. Pricing was explained taking the measurement of  $\frac{1}{2}$  metre of each cloth. For instance, how many large popline pads can be cut from half metre popline cloth and so on for falnnel and PUL. Using a simple unitary method it was explained how they can calculate the raw material cost of each of the pads. In terms of iverheads, they have to include the cost of their efforts, packaging cost and marketing cost.